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STAYING WITH THE TEAM: IDENTIFICATION AND SWITCHING COSTS IN THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESS (SUMMARY)

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 SUMMARY **STAYING WITH THE TEAM: IDENTIFICATION AND SWITCHING COSTS IN THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESS**

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Principal Topics

Among entrepreneurship scholars, there is growing interest in the emergence of entrepreneurial teams (Schjoedt et al., 2013; West, 2007; Forbes et al., 2006). Drawing on social identity theory (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1985) we develop a framework that suggests that a team member's prior exposure to other team members influences the member's decision to persist with the team, and that this influence is mediated by the member's identification with the team (Van Vugt & Hart, 2004). Moreover, we argue that the mediated effect is moderated by the member's switching costs (operationalized as relevant work experience). That is, identification's influence is particularly strong on the decision to stay when the focal member has a more attractive option.

Methods

The research setting of our study is the 2014 Global Game Jam (GGJ). The GGJ is the world's largest game jam with over 10,000 people participating in the annual event. The structure of the GGJ is similar to other game jams and hack-a-thons. Participants, including game programmers, designers, illustrators, producers, etc., meet up for a weekend of rapid game development over a 48-hour period. Prior research offers evidence that the GGJ offers a development environment directly analogous to professional game development and that around 5% of games worked on during the GGJ are monetized within six months of the event. Data for our analyses come from over 1200 responses to a post-jam survey administrated immediately following the 2014 GGJ and over 550 responses to a six-month follow-up survey distributed to individuals who completed the first survey.

Implications

This study contributes to our understanding of team turnover, an understudied aspect of new venture development (Ucbasaran et al., 2003). While previous studies have examined decisions to persist with an existing, and usually struggling endeavor (DeTienne et al., 2008; Gimeno et al., 1997), we study these processes in teams within their earliest stages of development. Results have practical implications for enterprising individuals attempting to build an entrepreneurial team, especially for a creative venture.

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